

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

August 3, 2025

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

We Gather in God's Name . .

PRELUDE

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

(Take a moment to center yourself with this prayer or pray your own gathering prayer)

Loving God, in whose arms we have found our identity, come among us to direct our faltering steps in the ways you would have us to go. Teach us to walk with Christ through the distractions that beckon us in other directions. Turn our vain striving into meaningful service, our foolish greed to the fulfillment of sharing, our confusion to clarity of vision, that we might worship you truly this hour. Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Listen, everyone who has ever felt far from God, rebellious or forsaken.

All: God is calling us. God is eager to put loving arms around us. God is waiting to satisfy our hunger and thirst.

One: Hear God’s call. Come home. Set your minds on things that are above.

All: God leads us to a new identity, a new life. We will worship and give thanks.

***OPENING HYMN** “I Come With Joy” **#507**

*CALL TO CONFESSION

What does God see within us and among us that we do not see? What defenses have we created to keep God out of our lives? How have we turned away from the life God intends for us? Now is the

moment to come out of hiding, for God already knows where we are. With all sincerity of heart, let us confess our sins in silence.

*SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON** “Change My Heart, O God”
Lt. Blue Songbook #61

Singing: Change my heart, O God, Make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, May I be like you.
You are the potter, I am the clay,
Mold me and make me, This is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God, Make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, May I be like you.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of our Lord Jesus the Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

. . . *to Proclaim God’s Word*

FIRST READING Psalms 107:1-9, 43 **p. 559**

SECOND READING Colossians 3: 1-11 **p. 201**

ANTHEM “God of the Deep” Choir

GOSPEL READING Luke 12: 13-21 **p. 74**

One: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Pastor Sara MacGilvra Branom

***HYMN OF RESPONSE** “Help Us Accept Each Other” **#358**

. . . *to Give Thanks to God* . . .

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD

THE OFFERTORY

***OFFERING RESPONSE**
“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” **#592**

Singing: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Help us, O God, to give enough of ourselves and our substance that we will be free of the stranglehold of possessions. Free us from the foolish illusion that our material lives matter most. Show us all the ways in which we can be “rich toward God,” rich toward you. Here we dedicate to you not only offerings, but ourselves. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER

One: Lord in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

***COMMUNION HYMN** “One Bread, One Body”
Lt. Blue Book #130

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S SUPPER

GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise

One: . . . Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Lt. Blue Book #124)

One: ... Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts, we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the one crucified and risen. Great is the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

One: ... Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

One: The gifts of God for the people of God.

All: Let us keep the feast.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

... and to Be Sent in God's Name

***CLOSING HYMN** "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above" #483

BENEDICTION

RESPONSE TO THE BENEDICTION "Go with God"
Lt. Blue Songbook #138

Singing: Go with God. Go with God.
As you leave this place, go with God.
God will direct your way, God will light ev'ry day.
As you leave this place, go with God.

POSTLUDE

The Upper Room

"God's Embrace"

Sunday, August 3, 2025

Read Psalm 56: 1-13

"You yourself [O God] have kept track of my misery. Put my tears into you bottle – aren't they on your scroll already?"

---Psalm 56:8 (CEB)

I volunteer at a women's prison. One of the highlights of my year is the annual Christmas gathering. Inmates and volunteers all pack into a huge gym, sitting side by side as guest speakers and worship leaders share messages of hope and encouragement. We enjoy two hours of worship and prayer, clapping and singing. The gathering concludes with volunteers distributing care packages to each inmate.

This year something different and life-changing happened. The chaplain asked the volunteers to come to the front of the room. She said to the inmates, "These women are here to pray with you; if you want prayer, come forward." Every woman in the gym stood up! We watched silently as, one by one, women stepped forward to receive prayer, bravely sharing their pain and heartache. A few times, I felt a woman rest her head on my shoulder, like a child with her mother. More than once, I noticed teardrops landing on my shoes during the prayer.

These images reminded me of how God pays attention to our every tear and embraces us in our sorrow. As I thought about that Christmas gathering, I truly experienced what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for comforting us like a mother comforts her child. Help us to turn to you in difficult times and to be a place of safety and refuge for others." Amen.

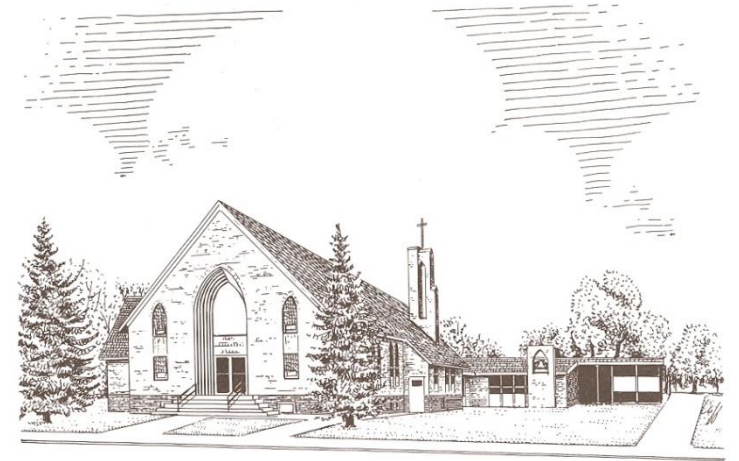
--Angie Gage (South Carolina, USA)

Thought for the Day:

"Like a loving mother, God holds us close."

(If you would like to read **The Upper Room** each day, you may pick up a copy in the narthex.)

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